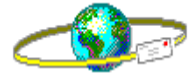




**Information Resource Center (IRC)
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Article Alert
April 2008

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. "How Democracies Grow Up"

Richard P. Cincotta. *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2008, 3 pages.

Does a country's age structure influence its political regime? Numerous studies have shown that populations with excessive numbers of young people invite a higher risk of political violence and civil strife than others. In other words, a country's chances for meaningful democracy increase as its population ages. In this article, the author examines the relationship of demography and the growth and stability of democracy.

2. "The Democratic Rollback"

Larry Diamond. *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2008, 13 pages

Since 1974, more than 90 countries have made transitions to democracy, but in a few recent years, the advance of democracy has been slowed, if not thwarted. The author posits that if democracies do not more effectively contain crime and corruption, generate economic growth, secure freedom and the rule of law, people will eventually lose faith and turn to authoritarian alternatives. To foster democracy in developing countries, western policymakers should demand more than superficial electoral democracy, and make foreign aid contingent on good governance.

3. "Economic Freedom Underpins Human Rights and Democratic Governance"

Anthony B. Kim. *WebMemo #1861*, March 18, 2008, 4 pages.

Promoting and preserving human rights cannot be isolated from economic freedom. When living standards are low and poverty persists, violence often replaces peace, and basic human rights are easily violated. As such, sustainable economic development backed by economic freedom plays a vital role in supporting the expansion and protection of human rights. The author concludes that the United

States should continue to stress economic freedom as a liberating moral force and the foundation of America's leadership for the future.

4. **"A Dime's Worth of Difference?"**

Kirk Victor. *National Journal*, February 23, 2008, 9 pages.

Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton have tried to highlight their differences on select issues, but an examination of their votes shows that they have strikingly similar records. The author compares the similarities and differences between the two U.S. Democratic presidential candidates, noting that the most striking difference is their style.

5. **"Condiment"**

Hendrik Hertzberg. *New Yorker*, March 17, 2008, 2 pages.

Arizona Senator and U.S. Republican presidential candidate John McCain has contemplated several governors for his vice presidential nominee, including Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania, former governor of Massachusetts Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee of Arkansas. In this article, the author suggests that McCain nominate current U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for her popularity, her breaking of the race and gender ceiling, and since she has similar views to that of McCain on the Iraq war.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

6. **"The Coming Financial Pandemic"**

Nouriel Roubini. *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2008, 5 pages.

The recent financial crisis in the U.S. has raised many questions. Will a weak dollar make matters worse? Will housing bubbles burst worldwide? Will financial confidence falter? Since the United States is such a huge part of the global economy, there is real reason to worry that an American financial crisis could mark the beginning of a global economic recession. The author examines the effect of U.S. economic slowdown to other countries.

7. **"How Bad is Bad?"**

John Maggs. *National Journal*, February 23, 2008, 7 pages.

According to economist Martin Feldstein, current problems in the housing and credit markets pose the threat of a deeper and longer recession than those in the past. The perception that a recession is under way has a huge impact on government, business and consumers. The article discusses the impact of recent recessions in the U.S. and looks at how to prevent a recession as deep and punishing as the one in 1981-82.

8. **"Growth Dynamics: The Myth of Economic Recovery"**

Valerie Cerra and Sweta Chaman Saxena. *The American Economic Review*, March 2008, 19 pages.

Although researchers have documented the link between financial crises and severe recessions, very little attention has been paid to whether countries fully recover from such large negative shocks, particularly where output is concerned. The paper analyzes the impact and the behavior of output following financial and political crises in a large set of 190 countries, particularly whether output losses are recovered. The economic impact of deterioration in a country's political governance or institutional quality is also examined.

9. **"Making Monetary Mischief: Using Currency as a Weapon"**

Jodi Liss. *World Policy Journal*, Winter 2007/08, 10 pages.

In a world of increasingly porous financial borders and rising sums of offshore money outside the purview of regulators, a deliberate and malicious attack on a country's currency could be used to

destabilize or even help to defeat a rival. The author describes how and why currency can be used as a weapon and how an attack on a country's currency can create turmoil in a state.

10. **"Is the Gold Standard Still the Gold Standard among Monetary Systems?"**

Lawrence H. White. *CATO Institute Briefing Paper #100*, February 8, 2008, 8 pages.

The gold standard is not a flawless monetary system, but neither is the fiat money alternative.

However, in light of historical evidence about the comparative magnitude of these flaws, the gold standard is a policy option that deserves serious consideration. Historical comparison shows that the gold standard has provided more moderate and steadier money growth in practice than the present-day alternative, politically empowering a central banking committee to determine growth in the stock of fiat money. In this study, the leading criticisms of the gold standard are addressed.

REGIONAL SECURITY

11. **"Using American Power Smartly: Advice to the Next U.S. President"**

Joseph S. Nye. *Issues & Insights*, February 2008, 21 pages.

A successful foreign policy vision is one that combines inspiration with feasibility. However, it is not clear that the U.S. has got that combination right. The author argues that a key skill for the next president -- whether it will be a Democrat or a Republican -- will be contextual intelligence, or rather, an ability to understand the current context of American foreign policy and where America stands in the world. The author opines that the next president should learn from past lessons and exercise "smart power" -- a combination of American soft and hard policies.

12. **"What Should the World Expect from America after Bush?"**

Thomas Carothers and Robert Kagan. Carnegie Endowment, March 04, 2008, 24 pages.

With a new occupant coming to the White House in January 2009, expectations are running high across the world for a major shift in U.S. foreign policy and a renewal of the transatlantic partnership. But how much change is likely? On what foreign policy choices can a politically divided America agree and what significant divergences will remain? The authors discuss what post-Bush U.S. foreign policy will likely mean for the world and where the presidential candidates differ with regard to their policies on the Middle East, climate change, trade, the war on terror, and the U.S. role in the world.

13. **"The Road to Recovery"**

Paul J. Saunders. *The National Interest*, January/February 2008, 5 pages.

With 66% of Americans opposing the use of military force to achieve democratization, Americans clearly disagree that pressuring governments around the world to become more democratic -- with all the elements of power -- is essential to fighting terrorism and is a very important goal for U.S. foreign policy. What do Americans define as their priorities then? The author examines how to advance the most important U.S. foreign policy goals: preventing terrorism and nuclear proliferation.

14. **"Disarmament Redux"**

J. Peter Scoblic. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March/April 2008, 7 pages.

After the bombing of Japan made clear the horror of the atomic bomb, U.S. officials initially pursued proposals to control or eliminate nuclear weapons. However, while their efforts have had some positive effect, the complete denuclearization of the United States and its foes has long been a taboo subject within the foreign policy establishment. The author examines the disarmament movement and the implication to the U.S. defense policy.

GLOBAL ISSUES AND ENVIRONMENT

15. "The Growing Food Cost Crisis"

Kent Garber. *U.S. News & World Report*, March 17, 2008, 2 pages.

According to the article, the combination of high food prices and social unrest is bound to stir up edgy memories of the early 1970s, when food prices were being pushed up by high energy costs and decreased supplies. The current wave of food troubles is the most significant since then, and arguably more troublesome too. The article examines the sharp rise in the cost of food, how it is hurting the poor, and how it has become the cause of violence and political instability around the world.

16. "Water and Sustainability: A Reappraisal"

Malin Falkenmark. *Environment*, March/April 2008, 14 pages.

According to the author, water can be divided into two categories. Green water is what vegetation needs to survive naturally from rainwater and soil moisture while blue water, which is accessible for human use including irrigation, is in rivers and aquifers. The need for water is growing not only because of population growth and agricultural expansion, but also biofuel expansion. The sustainability of global water resources is discussed in this article.

17. "Depending on Nature Ecosystem Services for Human Livelihoods"

Susan A. Mainka, et al. *Environment*, March/April 2008, 14 pages.

The article discusses the value of natural ecosystem services in preserving biodiversity and improving human conditions. The authors cite various types of ecosystem services including provisioning, regulating, cultural and supporting services. A chart showing the status of major ecosystems, as well as population pressures of each ecosystem is provided.

18. "Arctic Meltdown"

Scott G. Borgerson. *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2008, 15 pages.

The article discusses the political and economical implications of the impact of global warming and climate change on the Arctic Ocean and its icecap. As Arctic Ocean ice melts, the polar region will be more accessible to prospecting for the natural resources said to exist in significant amounts in the area. Currently, there are few international regulations governing the Arctic and nations attempting to exploit natural resources in the region may in the future result in armed conflict.

MEDIA, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

19. "Out of Print"

Eric Alterman. *The New Yorker*, March 31, 2008, 11 pages.

As the evidence of diminishment in economic vitality, editorial quality, depth, personnel, and the overall number of papers is everywhere, few believe that newspapers in their current printed form will survive. Newspaper companies are losing advertisers, readers, and market value. The article discusses the life and death of the American newspaper and the influence of the internet and technology on printed media.

20. "The 51st State"

Laura Gordon-Murnane. *Searcher*, February 2008, 11 pages.

What do you want to know about congressional representatives or senators? Can you find biographical background, information on credentials, or professional experience and expertise for the candidates? What positions do candidates take on the issues? The article highlights different resources and tools

that information professionals can use in order to make informed decisions on the 2008 presidential and congressional elections in the United States.

21. "In Your Facebook"

Kelly Wilson. *American Journalism Review*, February/March 2008, 2 pages.

Social websites provide a way for people around the world to interact as they never could before. Journalists use them as means to contact others for ideas and support on tough assignments or connect with editors for advice and job opportunities. The author surveys the views of various journalists to understand why more and more journalists are signing up for Facebook, a popular online social networking site.

22. "To Blog or Not to Blog: That is not the Question"

Kathy Cassidy. *Connect*, March/April 2008, 3 pages.

With the plethora of online tools available, primary students need to be taught -- in a safe and controlled environment -- what constitutes appropriate behavior on the Internet. The author discusses the use of blogs as a tool for learning and examines why blogging is an excellent way for children to connect and share their thoughts with the entire world.

U.S. SOCIETY AND CULTURE

23. "Learning from the World: Achieving More by Doing Less"

Lawrence Baines. *The Education Digest*, January 2008, 4 pages.

Throughout the United States, initiatives are being launched to extend the school day, increase homework, integrate technology, and add more high-stakes testing to today's curriculum. However, many countries around the world are employing radically different approaches by doing less. The article focuses on the educational differences between the United States and other countries in terms of school day length, homework load, educational technology, and schools and social change. Information about the cross-cultural differences in education systems and statistical information about the variances in test scores are provided.

24. "Democracy and Education: Empowering Students to Make Sense of Their World"

William H Garrison. *Phi Delta Kappan*, January 2008. 2 pages.

It is a fundamental belief under American system of governance that education is necessary for democracy. Looking closely at the relationship between democracy and education reveals a common foundation in a learning mechanism that is as important for classroom practice as it is for a democratic society. Less recognized is the equally important principle that democracy is necessary for education. The author discusses the importance of a democratic approach to public education in the United States.

25. "Moving On"

Christopher Clausen. *The Wilson Quarterly*, Winter 2008, 5 pages.

The article presents a reflection on the American desire for mobility with regard to housing in light of the subprime mortgage crisis of 2007, focusing on the American national characteristic and ability to relocate to a new city or town. The westward movement in the 19th century is also highlighted as a defining national experience.

26. "Conclusion: National Identity and Visual Culture in America"

David M. Sokol. *The Journal of American Culture*, March 2008, 4 pages.

The concept of a U.S. national identity can be seen in the nation's visual culture. The author highlights some printed words and images, posters, broadsides, fine arts and popular arts that reflect the history and social conditions in the country from the American revolution to the present time.